

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 05979 110804Z

ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 SS-15
NSC-05 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 SP-02 COME-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 INT-05 SMI-01
DLOS-09 /117 W

-----040476 120801Z /10

R 101720Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6669

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5979

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS SENV IWC CY SP PO

SUBJ: WHALING ACTIVITIES OF FISHING VESSELS SIERRA DN TONNA

REF: A) STATE 196019 (NOTAL) B) NICOSIA 568 (NOTAL)

1. CONOFF, WHO WAS IN MADEIRA JULY 26, 1978 WHEN CREWMEN
FROM THE SUNKEN TONNA WERE BEING REPATRIATED TO THEIR HOME
COUNTRIES, RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM THE CREW.

2. THE SHIP TONNA, WITH A CREW OF 42 (MADE UP OF 28 SOUTH
AFRICANS FROM CAPETOWN AND A MIXTURE OF NORWEGIANS, JAPANESE
AND OTHERS), WAS HOISTING A FIVE TON WHALE ABOARD THE VESSEL
WHEN ITS WINCH CAUGHT. THE VESSEL WAS THEN CAUGHT IN A SMALL
SQUALL WHICH, WITH THE WEIGHT OF THE WHALE AND THE CARGO
ALREADY IN THE HOLE, MADE THE SHIP BEGIN TO CAPSIZE SLOWLY.
THE VESSEL LATER SANK (JULY 23/24) WITH THE NORWEGIAN CAPTAIN,
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PAGE 02 LISBON 05979 110804Z

WHO REFUSED TO LEAVE HIS SHIP WHEN THE CREW ABANDONED
SHIP. THE CREW WERE EXPLICIT WHEN TALKING WITH CONOFF THAT
THEY WERE "HUNTING WHALES FOR THE JAPANESE."

3. CONOFF CALLED ON SOUTH AFRICAN CONSUL PECORARO ON
AUGUST 8 REGARDING INCIDENT. PECORARO ADVISED HE WAS TOLD
THAT TONNA WAS OWNED BY NORWEGIAN/SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANY WITH

AGENTS IN CAPETOWN. HE HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING FLAG, REGISTRY, ETC. WHEN TOLD THAT TONNA WAS SUSPECTED OF BEING A "PRIVATE WHALER" HE EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND DISMAY, SAYING THAT THIS TYPE OF INCIDENT COULD GIVE HIS COUNTRY BAD PUBLICITY WHICH IT DID NOT NEED OR WANT. PECORARO SAID THAT HE WOULD INFORM HIS GOVERNMENT ABOUT EMBASSY LISBON'S QUERY AND THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE US ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HE RECEIVED.

4. THROUGH OUR CONSULAR AGENT IN MADEIRA WE WERE INFORMED ON AUGUST 9 THAT AGENT FOR TONNA, BLANDY BROTHERS, WAS VISITED JULY 25 BY A MR. SHEPPHERD (SIC) OF THE SIERRA FISHING AGENCY, CAPETOWN, AND TWO JAPANESE "OFFICIALS". THE JAPANESE OFFICIALS APPEARED, WE ARE INFORMED, TO BE IN CHARGE IN THAT THEY ARRANGED FOR REPATRIATION OF THE CREWMEN AND ASKED MOST OF THE QUESTIONS. ACCORDING TO BLANDY BROTHERS, MR. SHEPPHERD AND THE TWO JAPANESE LEFT MADEIRA FOR JAPAN AFTER MAKING DETAILED INQUIRIES REGARDING THE SINKING OF THE VESSEL. BLANDY BROTHERS ADVISED THE CONSULAR AGENT THAT TONNA WAS FLYING DUTCH FLAG, WAS REGISTERED IN NETHERLAND ANTILLES, AND THAT SHIP WAS OWNED BY SOUTH AFRICAN/JAPANESE COMPANY.

5. IF FURTHER INFORMATION IS DEVELOPED, WE WILL INFORM ADDRESSEES.
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PAGE 03 LISBON 05979 110804Z

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Message Attributes

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